

An ACCOUNT of  
**Robert Crossfeild's Proceedings**  
 IN THE  
**HOUSE of LORDS,**  
 The last Session, and this Session of Parliament:  
~~Wherein will appear the~~  
**Present Miserable State and Condition**  
 OF THE  
**NATION,**  
 By the Open Violating and Invading of the  
**Law and Liberty of the Subject:**  
*Humbly Presented to the Consideration of the Lords and Commons in  
 Parliament Assembled.*

**I**T is by all Men an allow'd Principle, That 'tis the Bounden Duty of every Subject by the Laws of God, Nature, and the Nation, to contribute all that in him lies towards the Glory of God, and the Service and Preservation of his Native Country, and the greater his Quality or Station is, whether Spiritual or Temporal, so much the more is this Duty Incumbent on him.

If this wholesome Principle had been truly and sincerely practis'd this Reign, then might we have expected that God would have bless'd our Endeavours, and not have suffer'd us to have endur'd so long and tedious a War, and so great Expence of Blood and Treasure; and at last to be reduc'd to such a Pitch of Misery, as this Nation never groan'd under; and (which is more deplorable) not caus'd by our Enemies abroad, but our pretended Friends and Patriots at home; and which is worst of all, the Nation's groaping, as it were, in the Dark, not seeing the true Rise and Cause of our present Misery and approaching Ruin.

All which will appear by the Violent Oppression, Injustice, and judicial Blindness of the present Age.

For Brevity's sake I shall pass over a great Act of \*Injustice done to the Publick by \* Publick the Commissioners of Accounts, in the beginning of the Session of Parliament, holden me in my entitled since per- Sec. pag. in the Year 1691. and begin the Relation of my Proceedings at the Exhibiting my Petition to the House of Peers, the same Session of Parliament, as followeth, viz.

March 9. 1691. I Presented to the House of Peers the following Petition.



701c **Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled.**

*The humble Petition of Robert Crossfield,*

That your Petitioner having lately dedicated and presented to your Lordships a Book entitled, Great Britain's Tears: setting forth the great Abuses committed in the Government of Persons in Places of Trust, and also the Embezzlement of the Publick Treasure, the Hazard of the common Safety of the Nation: And your Petitioner having in Parliament drawn up some part of the said Miscarriages and Grievances that the Nation suffers under, relating to the Royal Navy, and being ready by good substantial Evidence to prove the same before this most Honourable House.

And your Petitioner therefore most humbly prays that your Lordships will please to hear and examine the said Grievances, that the Offenders may have such punishment; and the poor ~~Number~~ ~~that are~~ oppressed, such Relief, as to your Lordships Wisdom shall seem meet. And your Petitioner shall ever pray, &c.

That the present Commissioners for Sick and Wounded Seamen, and Exchanging Prisoners at War, (depending on the Admiralty) not regarding Instructions, or the Good of the Government, have committed gross Enormities; as Holding or Conveying as an unlawful Correspondence with the Enemy, and Wronging both King and Subject in their Accompts, with other great mismanagements. All which has been about a Year since laid in Writing before the Secretary of State by one Mr. Bafion, and by the King's Command examin'd before the Lords of the Admiralty, &c. And will appear, that the said Commission has been very injurious to the poor Sailors in particular, and very detrimental to the Government in general.

2. That the Lords of the Admiralty, and Commissioners of the Navy, have acted contrary to the Public Good, by countenancing, supporting, and preferring Criminals; and on contrary, persecuting the Innocent, and turning just Men out of their Offices.

3. That the Lordships have had great Discoveries laid before them of Embezzlements, and other great Breaches committed in the King's Yards, attended with Forgery and Perjury.

Some of the Commissioners of the Navy have in that Office administered Salaries of 30 l. per Annum, to vast Estates, having passed great Bills, and encouraged the Discovery of Embezzled Stores, to the great waste of the Publick Treasures.

5. That it has been a long Practice in the Navy to make out fallie Tickets and Powers, and to withhold the just Payments, to the general Discouragement of the Sailors, and their Families.

But God I could get the *foreſaid* Petition Read in the Houſe of Peers, I met with ſeveral ſwift, many Lords, both Spiritual and Temporal, declining to carry in the Bill, and being almoſt out of hopes, at length I met with a Noble Lord, that would carry it into the Houſe, and cauſ'd it to be Read on the 9th of Decemb<sup>r</sup>. Whereupon their Lordſhips were pleas'd to Order the Commiſſioners of the Survey to lay before the Houſe an Account of the Proceedings againſt the Commiſſioners of the Survey, and in the mean time their Lordſhips did Hear and Examine the Matter at the Bar of the Houſe, which put me in great hopes that the *ſaid* Practices would have been laid open that Parliament. N

the Commissioners of Accounts fearing that the Notorious Matters of Perjury, &c. in that Office, would have come to light. They to prevent the same, pretended in Answer to their Lordships Order, That the Matter was still depending on them, and not finish'd, &c. And so prevail'd with their Lordships to Refer the matter to them, which was accordingly done the 20th of *March* last, and the 21. and 31. of the above-mention'd Articles were also referr'd to their Examination, with Order to Transmit the same, when perfected, to the House; which (consider'd of much Important Business) they have not had leisure to do to this day! but as they have examin'd the aforesaid matter, sufficiently appears by what has been publish'd in Print, and will also be further demonstrated by what ensues; and so all those Notorious Crimes were hid, cover'd and hush'd up the last Session of Parliament, by these Gentlemens great Ingenuity.

Byc



But in order to the Detecting these falacious Practices, I did against the Meeting of this present Session of Parliament, Print and Publish a Book Entitled, *Truths Discov- ed*. Which I Dedicated to both Houses of Parliament, setting forth some of the horrible Corruptions in the Government. Also Mr. *Boston* Printed and Published the Case, Dedicated to the House of Peers, containing, not only the Evil Practices of the present Commissioners for Sick and Wounded, but also the more evil Practices thereof, by the Commissioners of Accounts. And that all these foul Matters might come to a fair Examination, I drew up a Petition to the House of Peers, but before I Inset it, I shall Relate the great (and I believe unparallel'd) difficulties I met with, in bringing the said Petition into the House.

Having drawn up my said Petition, I repaid to that Noble Lord, who carried it in to the House the last Parliament, and pray'd his Lordship to cause it to be Read, but found his Lordship very cool in the matter, tho' not refusing to do it, in the manner I waited upon, and attended his Lordship near a Month, but finding nothing move, and much time lost, I drew another Copy of my Petition, and presented it to divers other Noble Lords, both Spiritual and Temporal, but none thought fit to Adventure to carry in the said Petition, tho' the matter was actually Depending in the House from the last Parliament; upon which I was necessitated to take other Measures, and thereupon I wrote a Letter to my Lord-Keeper, and sent it into the House to his Lordship, by the Gentleman-Usher of the Black-Rod: A Copy of which Letter is as Followeth.

My Lord,

Jan. 27. 169.

**A**ltho' it is the unquestionable Right of every free Born Subject of England, to have the Liberty of Petitioning, and tho' it has in all Ages been also accounted the Indispensible Duty of every Peer, not to refuse a Petition that shall be offer'd him; yet have not I been able, in a Months Attendance and Solicitation of several Noble Lords, to get a Petition carried into the House of Peers. My said Petition is against Notorious Crimes, that have been Committed in the Admiralty, Navy, and Sick and Wounded Offices, whereby the King and Kingdom have been grossly abus'd, and the publick Treasure wasted, to a very high degree, which has already greatly Endanger'd the Common Safety, and certainly will (if not timely redress'd) bring the Nation into Confusion; all which I am fully able to prove.

Therefore, as an Englishman, I think myself oblig'd to lay open the same by the Duty I owe to God, my King and my Country.

And so I most humbly pray your Lordship to cause this Letter to be Read to the House, and move that I may be Call'd to the Bar to Present my Petition, being sorry I am forc'd to trouble your Lordship with this New way of Petitioning the House of Peers. I am attending at the Door of the House, and Remain, with all profound respect.

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Obedient Servant,

Robert Crosfeild

At the Receiving of which Letter, my Lord-Keeper (as I was inform'd) Acted with a great deal of Honour; For immediately he Reported the true Nature and Substance of it to the House, Telling their Lordships withal, That 'twas the severest Charge that ever he Read; at the making of which Report, the same Lord (who I had long apply'd to before) came out of the House in great haste, and sent one of the Door-keepers to me in the Painted Chamber, desiring me to send him my Petition, he having lost that which I had given him before, which I accordingly did, and then his Lordship returning into the House, spake (as I was inform'd) to this effect: That he acknowledg'd he had been very much Teez'd about bringing in this Petition; but that when he brought it in the last Parliament, it not meeting with that Incouragement, he hop'd and expected it would have had, was the Reason why he was so backward in doing it this Session, at which several of the Lords stood up and



And that if it had been offer'd to them, they would have brought it in; and the whole House said, They were very willing to hear it, but that the Business for the day was Order'd for the *East-India* Company; so my Petition not being read that day, I concluded his Lordship would have caus'd it to be Read the next Morning; but finding nothing mov'd, and fearing things were all asleep, I wrote out another Copy, and the next morning, viz. 29th of January, I offer'd it to a Noble Lord, who told me he heard I had been refus'd almost by every Body, and that he would carry it in for me, which his Lordship accordingly did, and immediately it was Read, a Copy of which is as followeth.

*To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled.*

*The Humble Petition of Robert Crosfeild,*

*Sheweth,*

**I** H<sup>um</sup> your Petitioner, the last Session of Parliament, presented his humble Petition to your Lordships setting forth several great Corruptions in the Government, a \* Coppy of the same is annex'd, and the said Corruptions and Miscarriages having not been reformed, nor the Actors therein punish'd, nor the Great Numbers of Oppress'd had any Relief, (but their Miseries increas'd) nor the said Petition thoroughly Examined. And your Petitioner being ready to prove the Allegations, and Articles therein by Good and Substantial Evidence

Your Petitioner therefore most humbly prays your Lordships to order a speedy Hearing of the said Corruptions and Grievances, before this most Honourable House in such manner, as to your Lordships Wisdom shall seem meet. And your Petitioner shall ever Pray, &c.

Robert Crosfeild.

Upon reading which Petition the House was pleas'd to make the following order.

*Die Mercarii, Jan. 29. 1695.*

**U**pon reading the Petition of Robert Crosfeild, praying to be heard as to the Corruptions and Grievances, laid before this House the last Session of Parliament in his Petition. It is order'd by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, that the Commissioners appointed by a late Act of Parliament to Examine, take and State the publick accounts of the Kingdom, do lay before this House with all Convenient speed; An account in Writing what they have done upon the orders of this House, sent to them the last Session of Parliament, in Reference to the matters mention'd in Mr. Crosfeilds Petition.

Math. Johnson Cler. Parliamentor.

As soon as this order was made, I was told by a Member of the house that when the Commissioners of accounts return'd their Answer, and that the whole matter lay fairly before the house, that then their Lordships would appoint a Committee to Examine it; accordingly I waited several days, and finding no Report from the Commissioners of accounts, and having good grounds to believe they would never return any, by reason it would discover their own Partial and Illegal practices, I therefore acquainted a Noble Lord therewith, and pray'd his Lordship to move the house to appoint a Committee to Examine these Corruptions, before whom I would prove divers Notorious matters, that



that were never before the Commissioners of Accounts, and delivered his Lordship a Petition to that purpose, which will be hereafter incerted. But his Lordship did not think fit to move the house thereupon, telling me, I had better wait some time longer, which I accordingly did. — But finding that diverse Crafty and Scandalous Reports were spread abroad, Namely, That my design in bringing these Complaints was not so much for the publick good, as it was to cause heats and feuds in Parliament to hinder the Kings Affairs, for that if these matters were laid before the King, his Majesty would effectually redress the same; But to acquit my self of such a Callumny I drew up a Petition to his Majesty, which I presented at *Kensington*, on Sunday the 9th of Feb. Inst. A Copy of which Petition is as followeth.

## To the Kings most Excellent Majesty.

The humble Petition of Robert Crosfeild.

Sheweth,

**T**Hat your Petitioner hath a few days since presented his humble Petition to the house of peers (where it is now depending) setting forth the great Corruptions and Evil Practices of the Admiralty, Navy, and Sick, and Wounded Offices, a Copy of which is herunto annex'd.

That the said Corruptions having been practis'd and strongly supported, the greatest part of your Majesties Reign, Your Petitioner humbly Conceives, that 'tis from thence has proceeded all the Ruines and Distresses that have fallen upon the publick, which if not redress'd are likely to Increase to such a degree, as to prove of fatal Consequence.

That as these proceedings, do greatly tend to Allienate the hearts of your Majesties good Subjects, who have ventur'd their Lives and Fortunes for your Majesties service, so on the contrary, the Redress of these Grievances and bringing the Offenders to Justice, will greatly draw the affection of your faithful people, to your Majesties Government and your Petitioner, in all humility Conceives that the general love of those Millions of your Majesties good Subjects that have and do so freely Contribute their Estates for your Majesties Service, is much more to be valu'd than the Love of those few that serve your Majesty chiefly for the Lucre of great Estates, some of whom 'tis to be fear'd, will be too ready when opportunity serves, to draw their Swords in behalf of your Majesties Enemies, the truth of which appears by their wilful fatal Management, in almost every Branch of your Majesties Service this War.

That your Petitioner being desirous (if possible) to prevent these matters being Examined in open Parliament, least feuds and heats should arise, which may be of ill Consequence to your Majestys Affairs, and being humbly of opinion that your Majesty may redress these Grievances by a Committee of such Noble Persons, who well understand the nature of the Crimes, and are of known Integrity, and Zealous for your Majestys true Interest and happy Government, the Names of whom your Petitioner has humbly presum'd to insert.

\* Duke of Shrewsbury.  
Lord privy Seal.  
Marquess of Normanby.  
Earl of Rochester.  
Earl of Bridgwater.  
Earl of Stamford.  
Earl of Malborough.  
Earl of Monmouth.  
Earl of Torrington.  
Lord Cornwallis.  
Marquess of Carmarthen.  
Lord Cornbury.  
Sir Richard Onslow.  
Sir Samuel Bernadiston.

Your Petitioner therefore most humbly prays your Sacred Majesty, to appoint the said Committee to be nam'd (with such other persons as your Majesty in Wisdom shall think fit to add thereto) to Hear and Examine the Articles and Allegations in the annex'd petition, and with all Convenient speed to make a Report to your Majesty, without the accustomed formality and Delays, That the Offenders may be punish'd, the Grievances Redress'd, and the minds of Your Majesties good Subjects quietted, and their Hearts Reunited to your Majesty in all Love and Duty. And your Petitioner shall ever pray.

Robert Crosfeild.

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The same Evening I receiv'd the Kings answer to this Petition, by the Secretary of State to this Effect, *That my Petition was Read, but that the matter being depending before the house of Peers, his Majesty did not think fit to meddle with it.* And thus I found the aforesaid Reports of the Kings hearing these matters to be utterly false, whereupon, I apply'd again to the house of Peers, and finding no Report nor any answer return'd from the Commissioners of Accounts, nor any probability of the same: I drew another Copy of the aforesaid Petition, relating to the Commissioners of Accounts, which by reason of the great difficulty I had found to get it Carry'd into the house; I inclos'd it in a Letter and sent it to Sir George Treby, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Plea's, who was then speaker of the house (my Lord-keeper being Indispos'd) by the Gentleman Other of the Black Rod, a Copy of which Letter and Petition is as followeth, viz.

February 13th 1694.

My Lord,

**T**HE great difficulty I have found, to get a Petition Carry'd into the house of peers, obligeth me to give your Lordship this trouble.

I have a Petition of Complaint against diverse Notorious Corruptions, in the Government now depending in the House, upon which their Lordships have Issu'd an order to the Commissioners of Accounts, But the said Commissioners delaying or rather never Intending to obey the said order, and fearing the house of Peers, as well as the Nation in General may be a gain Impos'd upon, and disappointed this Session of Parliament as they were the last, I therefore humbly pray your Lordship to read the Inclos'd Petition to the house, it being of great Concern to the publick good: And Mr. Baston who is named therein with my self, are attending at the Door to answer the same.

Directed on the back  
side to the Right  
Honourable Sir  
George Treby, Lord  
Chief Justice of the  
Common Plea's.

I am, My Lord,

Your Lordships most obedient Servant

Robert Grosfield.

To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of Robert Grosfield.

Sheweth,

**T**HA when your Petitioner presented his humble Petition, to your Lordships the last Session and this Session of Parliament, It was not only design'd to lay open the Corruptions and Evil practices of the Admiralty, Navy, and Sick, and Wounded Officers, but also Intended as an Appeal from the Justice of the Commissioners, for Stating the publick Accounts, who in the latter end of the year 1693. Had the Complaint laid before them, against the present Commissioners for Sick and Wounded, which contrary to the publick good, they have delay'd to this day in the manner following, viz.

That the said Complaint was about five months in their Office sworn to, before it came under Examination, till on the first of August 1694 The said Commissioners of Accounts sent for Mr. Baston, and, after rejecting the first three Articles in his Complaint, they, in an Illegal and Arbitrary manner, Examined the rest, and Countenanc'd and Conceall'd manifest Perjury therein, as well as other notorious Crimes, all which lay Dormant till the beginning of March 1694.

That your Petitioner the last Session of Parliament, presenting his humble Petition to this most Honourable House; your Lordships were pleas'd to order the said Commissioners of Accounts, to lay before the House an account of the proceedings, against the Commissioners for Sick and Wound-



Wounded, to which in Eleven days, viz. from the 9th to the 20th of March, they return'd only a Verbal answer, and pretended the matter was still depending before them and not finish'd, &c. by which they prevail'd to have it Recommended, which was accordingly done, as well as the 2d and 3d Articles in my Petition, which they Examined as Illegally as before (all which appears by what Mr. Basson and your Petitioner have set forth in Print). And so the matter has been delay'd by the said Commissioners of Accounts to this day, by which means the Nation has been sadly disappointed of a most necessary discovery, which otherwise might have been laid open to your Lordships the last Session of Parliament, and in all probability, Infinite Evils prevented that has since fallen upon the Publick.

That the Commissioners of Accounts having acted in the aforementioned manner, their Report, whenever they make it, will appear to their shame, and so your Petitioner humbly Conceives it naturally follows, they will never obey the present order of this most Honourable House (which has already been fifteen days unanswered) so as to make a Report of these matters willingly, but Endeavour by all means possible to Evade and delay it this Session of Parliament also, under diverse specious pretences of other more Important business. For preventing of which, and for that your Petitioner humbly Conceives, the distresses and danger that the publick lies under, is very great by reason of the violent perverting and obstructing of Justice, and for that the adversaries have no way to withstand a Legal hearing of these Notorious matters, but by the aforesaid method of delays.

Your Petitioner does therefore most humbly pray, your Lordships to appoint a Committee to hear and Examine the Articles, and Allegations in his late Petition, who in the mean time that the Commissioners of Accounts may delay their Report, shall have diverse Enormous Crimes prov'd before their Lordships, that were never before the said Commissioners of Accounts.

And your Petitioner shall ever Pray, &c.

Robert Crosfield.

This Petition Enclos'd in the aforesaid Letter, was deliver'd by the Usher of the Black-Rod to Sir George Treby, and I expecting his Lordship would have mov'd the house therein (as my Lord Keeper had done before) I attended that day, but heard nothing of it, Then I came to the House the next morning, and understood from one of the Clerks of the Parliament (whose name I think is Walker) That Sir George Treby had given my Letter and Petition to him, and told him he had nothing to do to move the House in it, and that every body knew Mr. Crosfield's business, and offer'd to give my Petition back.

Thus all these foul Crimes, that have been laying open these two Sessions of Parliament, are knock'd down dead by this last Act of denial of Justice in the highest Court of Indicture, which has oblig'd me to Print these Proceedings; and because the matters are so notorious, as hardly to be Parell'd in any Age or Nation, I shall therefore crave leave to make some short Observations upon the whole.

And 1st, observing our unaccountable Losses and Miscarriages with the great Scurges, into which the publick is brought to find out Mony for Carrying on the War, It is matter of amazement to Consider, That there should be such Coldness, or rather unwillingness to Examine into that Mass of Wickedness, that has been laid open, which having overspread the Nation like a Leprosy, has been the true Cause of all our past and present miseries, and must Inevitably bring us to Ruine, if the Laws are not speedily put in Execution to prevent it. I say, 'tis matter of Amazement, that we should be backward to Enquire into the Cause of our Misery.

2dly, Our practices are not only contrary to the Rules of common Prudence and Reason, but also to the practice of all other Nations, It being publickly known, That the French and Venetians have lately constituted Commissioners, to Enquire into publick frauds, as naturally concluding (tho none are Complain'd of) that there will be Cheats and Embezelments of the publick Mony in time of War, when there is most need of frugality. But we are so far from doing like them, that we are unwilling to Enquire into those Notorious Miscarriages that are already laid open, tho some of them have been actually prov'd over and over, and the Criminals Protected and Contin'd in their Employments to this day.



3dly, That as my Lord Keeper Acted with much Honour, and did his Duty for the publick good, in Reporting my Letter before mention'd to the House of Peers, so on the contrary Sir George Treby, in refusing to Read or Report my Letter, or Petition to the House, has not only deny'd Justice, and put a stop to this necessary Discovery, and Contributed to protect those Criminals that ought to be brought to Justice: But has also given a preident to Encourage Evil Practices, and Destroy the Liberty of the subject by taking away the Petition Right. For if Officers and Ministers of Trust Act Corruptly, and Oppress the People, and there be no way to appeal from their Justice but to Parliament, then such Appeal or Complaint must be by Petition; But if the known Liberty and Right of Petitioning be destroy'd, our Laws are Ineffectual and all great Men become Lawless, none being able to bring them to answer their Crimes: And if our Laws are not put in Execution, they are in effect Discontin'd and Abolish'd. And if Laws be the Foundation support and upholder of Government, Then whatever Government wants will or strength to assert its own Laws, and bring offenders to Justice, must needs be in a very weak and Tottering Condition and near a period, and this ought to be matter of great sorrow, to all thinking Men that with the prosperity of their Country, for however, slightly it may be thought of 'tis certainly a most sore and dangerous Disease, and Requires a speedy and strong purge, or 'twill be past Cure.

And therefore in short, if there be any Law in *England*, to punish those heinous Crimes that I have offer'd to prove, I do and shall insist on, and Demand it as my Birth Right, to be Speedily and Legally heard upon my Petition, and Articles now lying in the House of Peers: Not doubting but by their Lordships Wisdom, Prudence and Moderation, matters may soon be Regulated to the Happiness of the King and Kingdom.

*Robert Crossfeild.*

*February 18th 1692.*



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